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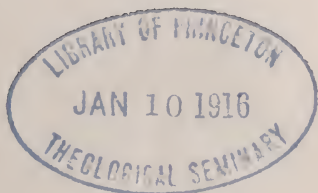
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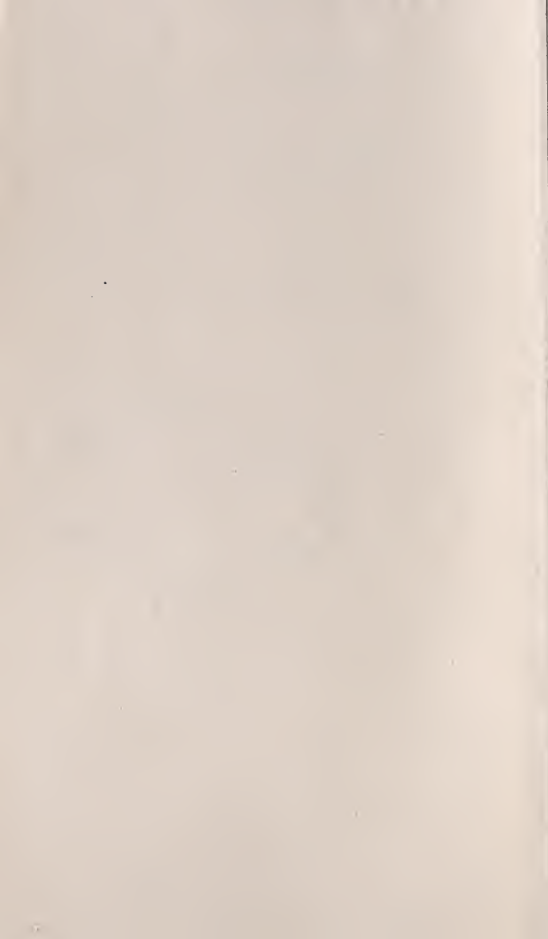
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**Is "Preparedness for War"
Sensible or Consistent
with Bible Teaching?**

BY

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Is "Preparedness for War" Sensible and Consistent with Bible Teaching?

(Reprint from the New York Evening Post)

What wonderful things are happening in these days! And these events seem clearly to point to great errors and misconceptions in the days preceding, for otherwise things that are would not exist. Perhaps the explanation is that men and women of the past have not sought earnestly to find out what truth is, for the reason that they have preferred to secure temporary ends and not best results.

A striking illustration is the different interpretations given to the Bible, which have resulted in the formation of many sects and denominations existing among the prominent nations of the world. One result that should not surprise us is that Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States, has urged "preparedness for war" that would cost the United States about two billions of dollars, upon which interest must be paid by taxing the people, and an additional large sum raised to support the "preparedness" to be maintained. The excuse or reason which the President alleges as the justification for his stand is that the

Bible clearly requires it, and that this teaching is to be found in five verses of the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel.

I believe the true interpretation of this passage is that in those days and within reach of the small towns or villages of the Israelites there were Bedouin or Nomadic tribes that lived in tents in the desert and made excursions at will to secure support by robbery and who were quite ready to take captives to be held for ransom or other purposes, and even to commit murder. Very naturally, for the protection of those small communities a watchman was engaged to blow a trumpet that would be a warning to the people and arouse them for defense if there should be occasion. Then follows a lesson as to the duty of faithfulness and responsibility which would attach to the watchman if he slept or was not otherwise alert to keep the people from harm.

Our President, who formerly was at the head of a university where religious training is a great factor, says that these six verses previously suggested by Mr. Roosevelt, have influenced his recommendation. It is pitiable indeed that a religious convention, recently held at Atlantic City, should have accepted the President's exposition of Scripture and endorsed his proposed action. In this action other parts of the

Old Testament, including Ezekiel 3:17-21, which declares Ezekiel's office to be that of a spiritual watchman and commissioned to warn the people to turn from their wickedness, or they will die in their sins, and the whole of the New Testament, have been entirely disregarded.

There is no reference to God's commands either in the Old or New Testament, and God's and Christ's existence and claims are left out of consideration. Likewise, there is no admission of the truth that every man has a conscience which he is bound to satisfy. Neither is there any recognition of the fact that there is an eternity, a future accountability, and that throughout the Bible there is a constant reminder that God's claims come first and earthly duties are secondary. Neither is the fact considered that we are commanded to look upon things seen as temporal, and those unseen as superior and eternal.

Our progressive President and his followers also make nothing of this New Testament teaching:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world.

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

And in Revelations, 21:3-8, we have the assurance:

“And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God: and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away. And He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He saith, write; for these words are faithful and true. And He said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But, for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.”

In the Sermon on the Mount there are some wonderful teachings, which include these two:

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” and “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

Do our would-be leaders who are so much influenced by their translation of Ezekiel believe that men are not acceptable to God and will not inherit eternal life who are not pure in heart and do not hunger and thirst after righteousness, and that it is a right and duty to take these things into account in urging that we must be "prepared" and have a large standing army who will kill and destroy if, through diplomacy or mercantile selfishness, as Mr. Ford claims, we are drawn into conflict?

Let us now turn to some of the teachings of the Old Testament:

In Genesis, ninth chapter, we find:

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you: even as the green herb have I given you all things.

"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof shall ye not eat.

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man, and at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, (and the reason is given), for in the image of God made He man."

In Exodus 20, we have a record of Ten Commandments given with great impres-

siveness by Moses from Mount Sinai (in which we are forbidden to kill or to steal). Most religious people have accepted this command as binding for all time. Throughout the world it has been adopted as a proper basis for determining what is wise and just in human government.

Christ taught the present obligation of the Ten Commandments when there came to Him a man with the inquiry: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" His answer was: "Thou knowest the Commandments. Do not kill, Do not Steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother."

If the need for "preparedness" is Scriptural, what shall we say of Psalms, and Job, and other books and prophets who so urgently declare that God is almighty and trust in Him indispensable. Is it right to teach them and permit them to be regularly read in the churches? What will our progressive leaders say to the charge or to the inference that these teachings are farcical or that we have no business to take them into account in determining what God's will and methods are.

There is another very impressive teaching in Jeremiah, seventeenth chapter, which the searcher for truth and right living cannot afford to pass over. Jeremiah says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and

desperately wicked: who can know it?" As this is the state of the unrenewed human heart among all nations, can there be success or happiness, nationally or individually, if this is not considered as essential to a successful life and to secure the blessing of God, who estimates and rewards us according to what we are, for we are taught that man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

There is another very important point that should be considered in connection with "preparedness" that is very practical, but to which I have not seen allusion. It is that with the wonderful inventiveness of the age and the numerous changes, even in the art of war, we cannot be sure that any preparations we are making to-day will meet the needs of the years to come. As we have now to provide for the improvements, as they are called, in the artillery, aeroplanes that can attack from a great height in the air, submarines which destroy so many ships, both warlike and used for commercial purposes, poisonous gases which will undoubtedly be made more deadly, does it not seem unwise to incur the immense expense proposed with the belief that we will secure a protection that will be ample.

It has been lately asked by a German official: "How can the United States disapprove of war when they achieved their

own independent existence through war?" I reply that thus far it has been a very costly undertaking and we have not yet seen the end. We were obliged to begin our national existence with slavery, and a real unity has been secured only by an immense loss of life and bitterness of feeling between the North and the South which is not yet wholly removed. But this has left us with another serious problem on our hands, of which no man yet knows the solution, and that is the disposal of about 9,000,000 negroes with whom the whites are not willing to associate. On the other hand, who knows how much better an arrangement might have been made had we trusted in God, and with Bible in hand conferred with the English nation as to what settlement would be wisest and best for all parties concerned. The French-Canadians have not yet accepted the nationality which Great Britain sought to force upon them, but are maintaining a feeling of antagonism and more or less hatred.

How can any system of government endure or be conscientiously accepted when it compels its citizens, who have accepted the Ten Commandments, to kill their fellow men and destroy their property, the very things which these commandments forbid them to do.

Why should men like Mr. Wilson wallow in the mire of worldliness and indefiniteness while there is an all-sufficient highway of spiritual truth which Christ declares himself to be.

The devil had the effrontery to ask Christ to bow down to him and worship him. Is not his influence apparent in the attitude of Mr. Wilson and his followers?

Can a reliable ruler or teacher ignore Christ's teaching that He is the light of the world, and who declares: "He that is not with me is against me. And he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

Can a trained soldier who is willing to kill and prepares for it, possibly enter heaven, in which there is "no spot or wrinkle or any such thing?"

It seems incredible that the President, his cabinet and other advisers should urge the people to do just what the nations of Europe have done for a long time and with such lamentable results. Each of the great powers of Europe has been in a condition of "preparedness" and each one has sought to keep a little ahead of the others.




Let us recall a part of the cost which is being paid by each of the parties whose example Mr. Wilson wants us to follow. It is practical bankruptcy of all, practice of and indifference to cruelty, loss of religious faith, defiance of God, a lower standard

of morality, an enormous death list of men unprepared for the other world, suspension of manufacture, a multitude of widows and orphans and numerous citizens or subjects who have been crippled for life, the absolute heartlessness developed in the sinking of ships conveying food to starving Belgians, hospital ships which are carrying the sick and wounded, and the destruction of unarmed vessels for conveying freight and passengers which will take a large sum of money and a long time to replace.

In conclusion I will only say that the proposition presented to the American people is one which wholly ignores God, is infidel in its spirit, assumes there is no eternity to be considered, no further accountability, no deceitfulness above all things to be removed, and no prayer and divine leadership required.

Yonkers, N. Y.

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